

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 1, 2005. Claims 1 to 31 and 46 to 64 remain pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 16, 31 and 46 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The specification has been amended to update the status of the information incorporated by reference. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1 to 15, 61 and 62 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101. The rejections are traversed. Specifically, while Claims 1 to 15, 61 and 62 are method claims, the Office Action's assertion that a process for providing a user with exclusive control over a device's capabilities could be performed mentally in conjunction with pen and paper is simply not possible. For example, how would one mentally provide a user with exclusive control over a device's capabilities using mental steps in conjunction with pen and paper? Those skilled in the art readily recognize that such a process requires some mechanical/computer related process since a device, as claimed, is a concrete unit that requires some type of mechanical and/or computer manipulation. Thus, the grounds for the rejection are simply flawed. Accordingly, withdrawal of the § 101 rejections is respectfully requested.

Nonetheless, Claim 1 has been amended merely to make it clearer that some of the steps are performed by an information processing apparatus, while others are performed by the device itself. Accordingly, amended Claim 1 provides even better compliance with § 101.

Claims 1 to 31 and 46 to 64 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,611,050 (Theimer) in view of U.S. Publication No. 2002/0007422 (Bennett) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,633,932 (Davis). The rejections are traversed and the Examiner is requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in light of the following comments.

The present invention as defined by independent Claims 1, 16, 31 and 46 concerns a device providing a user with exclusive control over the device's capabilities. According to the invention, the device receives a request from an information processing apparatus (e.g., an external PC) to provide the user with exclusive control over the device's capabilities. The device, in turn, determines whether it is available for the user to obtain exclusive control. If so, the user is provided with exclusive control of the device's capabilities. However, if the device is not available for the user to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities, the user is added to a reservation queue of users requesting exclusive control of the device's capabilities. The device also receives, from the information processing apparatus, a request to process a job using the device's capabilities, whereby the job is added to a job queue. Then, if the device provides exclusive control of its capabilities to the user when the user is a first position within the reservation queue, a job at a first position with the job queue, corresponding to a user other than the user who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, is deferred from being processed during a period in which the user, who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities maintains exclusive control of the device's capabilities.

Thus, according to the invention, users wanting to obtain control of the device are placed in a reservation queue, and if the user is provided with exclusive control when the user reaches the first position within the reservation queue, jobs pending in the job queue for other users are deferred during the period in which the user has exclusive control.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 1, 16, 31 and 46, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of, in a case where a device determines that the device is not available to provide a user requesting to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities with exclusive control, adding the user to a reservation queue of users requesting to obtain exclusive control of the device's capabilities, wherein, if the device provides exclusive control of the device's capabilities to the user when the user is at a first position within the reservation queue, a job at a first position within a job queue, corresponding to a user other than the user who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, is deferred from being processed during a period in which the user, who has been provided exclusive control of the device's capabilities, maintains exclusive control of the device's capabilities.

Theimer is merely seen to disclose that a user is remotely identified and a device in close proximity to the location of the user is controlled so as to provide the user with the ability to use the device based on policy information of the user. Specifically, as seen in Fig. 18, a Device Agent for a particular device provides appropriate ownership rights with a user in a case where the device is not exclusively owned by another when the user commands the Device Agent to generate an ownership request. However, in a case

where the device is exclusively owned by another, the Device Agent does not add the ownership request to a reservation queue, but denies the ownership request altogether. If the user wants to acquire the appropriate ownership rights, the user further commands the Device Agent to generate a new ownership request. Thus, as readily admitted in the Office Action, Theimer fails to disclose any mechanism for providing the user with control over a particular device that may already be exclusively owned by another user. Moreover, Theimer fails to disclose that the user requesting ownership rights is added to a reservation queue of users requesting ownership rights, much less that a first job in a job queue is deferred if the user is provided exclusive control when they are at a first position within the reservation queue.

Bennett merely discloses software applications that control various types of equipment, where more than one application can access the equipment to perform an operation. Different types of access include "exclusive read" access, "read" access, "exclusive write" access, or "write" access, where the read and write access privileges are mutually exclusive. If one application has been granted "exclusive read" access, another application cannot be granted either "exclusive read" or "read" access. Likewise, if one application has been granted "exclusive write" access, another application cannot be granted either "exclusive write" or "write" access. In either of these cases where access has been granted to another application, the application requesting access is placed in a wait queue (depending on the priority of the requesting application). There are 4 types of wait queues (read, write, exclusive read, and exclusive write) corresponding to the requested type of access. Thus, while Bennett may place an application requesting access

to a resource in a wait queue, such a disclosure may, at best, be seen to correspond to the claimed reservation queue. That is, each application requesting access is requesting to perform a function (read, write), and therefore, placing the application in a wait queue is best seen to correspond to placing the access request in reservation queue. Once the application is granted access, the application is notified of the same and it can then perform the function associated with the access request. However, Applicants fail to show anything in Bennett or Theimer corresponding to the use of both a reservation queue of users requesting exclusive control of a device's capabilities, and a job queue of jobs, much less that the two queues function in conjunction with one another if exclusive control is provided when the user is at a first position in the reservation queue so as to defer a job at a first position in the job queue corresponding to a different user. Accordingly, a combination of Bennett and Theimer still would not have resulted in the present invention.

Davis is not seen to add anything to overcome the deficiencies of Theimer and Bennett. Specifically, Davis merely discloses deferring printing of a document until a printing node locally authenticates the intended recipient. That is, Davis merely requires a user to be authenticated before a received print job is printed out. Since authentication of the user is not included in Claims 1, 16, 31 and 46, Davis fails to make up for Theimer and Bennett's deficiencies.

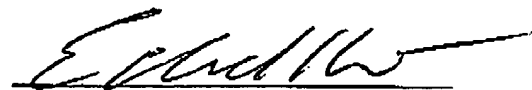
In view of the forgoing amendments and remarks, all of Claims 1 to 31 and 46 to 64 are believed to be allowable.

No other matters having been raised, the entire application is believed to be in

condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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